

B2-C1 Worksheet: Paris Fashion Week's Waterfall Problem - 28 June 2026

Article

At Paris Fashion Week, Louis Vuitton set up an eight-metre artificial waterfall beside a sand-covered runway for Pharrell Williams' spring-summer menswear show. The event took place during one of Paris's most severe June heatwaves, with temperatures rising above 40C. What might normally have looked like a playful beach fantasy quickly became a symbol of bad timing. Guests were invited to admire surf-inspired clothes, sand and music, but outside the show ordinary people were dealing with hotter streets and public warnings, while staff and guests tried to keep cool.

The installation came under fire from residents, students and local officials who felt that such a luxury spectacle could give off the wrong message in a city struggling to cope with heat. Critics also questioned the exclusive use of public space around the Cite Universitaire, where many students live. For them, the contrast between high-end fashion, temporary beaches and overheated daily life was hard to ignore. Some felt that a student garden had been temporarily taken away from the community for a private brand event.

LVMH pointed out that the waterfall used city water in a closed-loop system and that the sand would be reused, while the underfunded institution could make use of the income. These details softened some criticism. Even so, the controversy raises a wider question about how luxury brands fit in with a hotter world. Fashion houses must weigh up image, profit, public space and responsibility. A striking show can draw attention to a collection, but it can also draw attention to inequality. The point is not that fashion must become plain or joyless. It is that spectacle now has to answer tougher questions about climate, comfort and public trust.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. Louis Vuitton created an artificial waterfall for a Paris Fashion Week show.
2. The show took place during a cold period in Paris.
3. The article says the event became controversial partly because of the heatwave.
4. Some critics felt the show gave off the wrong message.
5. Students and residents were completely happy about the use of public space.
6. LVMH said the water was used in a closed-loop system.
7. The article suggests the event also brought money to an underfunded institution.
8. The final paragraph says luxury brands only need to think about profit.

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. set up	A. to happen
2. took place	B. to make people notice something
3. came under fire	C. to arrange or install something
4. pointed out	D. to be criticised
5. give off	E. to consider something carefully before deciding
6. make use of	F. to match or suit a situation
7. fit in with	G. to produce or suggest a feeling or message
8. weigh up	H. to say something clearly, especially as an important fact
9. keep cool	I. to use something effectively
10. draw attention to	J. to avoid becoming too hot

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. luxury	A. extreme
2. artificial	B. private
3. severe	C. argument
4. residents	D. unfairness
5. exclusive	E. duty
6. criticism	F. dramatic
7. controversy	G. locals
8. responsibility	H. high-end
9. striking	I. disapproval
10. inequality	J. man-made

Use the new language

Please choose 5 words or phrases and make your own sentence using the new word or phrase.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. What kind of fashion or advertising event would draw your attention?	1. Why did this show come under fire even though the water was reportedly reused?
2. Have you ever seen a public event that felt badly timed?	2. How can a company weigh up spectacle, profit and responsibility in public?
3. Do you think luxury brands should be more careful during a heatwave?	3. Does high-end fashion fit in with a world of rising heat and resource pressure?
4. What helps you keep cool at outdoor events?	4. When does creative branding become tone-deaf?
5. Would a waterfall make a fashion show more interesting to you?	5. Should public institutions make use of luxury sponsorship if they need money?
6. Do you usually notice the message that a brand gives off?	6. How much responsibility do brands have for the social message they send?
7. Have you ever felt that public space was being used too commercially?	7. Can criticism of luxury events become performative, or is it usually justified?
8. Which brands seem creative without looking careless?	8. What would a genuinely climate-aware fashion week look like?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F

Phrase Match: 1=C, 2=A, 3=D, 4=H, 5=G, 6=I, 7=F, 8=E, 9=J, 10=B

Synonym Match: 1=H, 2=J, 3=A, 4=G, 5=B, 6=I, 7=C, 8=E, 9=F, 10=D

Example sentences with the phrases

1. The brand set up a dramatic display beside the runway.
2. The show took place during a difficult week of extreme heat.
3. The event came under fire from people who disliked its message.
4. The company pointed out that the water was reused.
5. A luxury event can give off the wrong impression if the timing is poor.
6. Organisers tried to make use of the unusual outdoor space.
7. Some people felt the show did not fit in with the reality of the heatwave.
8. Brands need to weigh up creativity and public responsibility.
9. Guests had to keep cool during the hot Paris evening.
10. The controversy helped draw attention to inequality in public spaces.